

THE ARTS

Simpson painting made permanent in Waterbury museum

By Shirley Murtha | February 1, 2025



Mattatuck Museum Collections Manager Wayne Eldred (l.) and Chief Curator Keffie Feldman stand with artist Bill Simpson as his painting, *Fishing with Nick*, is accepted into the museum's permanent collection. Photo courtesy of Bill Simpson

Local artist William (Bill) Simpson has had one of his charcoal drawings accepted into the permanent collection at the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury. The piece, *Fishing with Nick*, was a visitor favorite during the 2022 Juried Members Show at the museum, so much so that Simpson was invited to return it and three additional drawings in December 2023 as part of a group show titled *Connecticut Artists Depict Trees and Forests*.

Simpson notes that most museums depend on donations of work by contemporary working artists to enhance their collections, and most artists are grateful to the museums for being included in solo or group shows. "Like myself, it is considered a n honor and a confirmation of the work's value. I'm very proud to have a piece of mine in the Mattatuck's collection." He thanks Chief Curator Keffie Feldman, Collections Manager Wayne Eldred and Museum Director Bob Burns for their interest in and support of his work and that of other emerging artists.

Fishing with Nick has deep emotional context for Simpson that began as the water he was drawing began to move up into the trees. Although not his intention, it began to look like a swamp, and his mind filled with memories of one of his favorite short stories, *Big Two-hearted River*, one of a series written by Ernest Hemingway in 1925 based on Hemingway's experiences growing up on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In this story, a wounded and traumatized veteran named Nick Adams wanted to fish that day, but he could not make

himself wade through the deep water to fish in the swamp. “He looked back. The river just showed through the trees. There would be plenty of days coming when he could fish the swamp.”

After that, it was clear to Simpson that the title of his painting would be *Fishing with Nick*.

The Mattatuck Museum, located at 144 West Main Street in Waterbury, is open Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Getting to Know Us



Name: Patty Sansone
Position: Textiles Volunteer
Lived in Granby for 58 years
Occupation: Legal Assistant Retired from Hamilton Sundstrand

Patty and her husband, Jim, are long-standing members of the Historical Society. Patty previously served on the Board of Directors, including as an officer, and organized the Annual Dinner and Wassail Party for many years. Since 2012 she has been a regular Thursday morning volunteer in Textiles, helping to preserve the magnificent dresses, coats, quilts, uniforms, linens, etc. that are donated from families with Granby lineage. If Patty's not working in Textiles, you might find her at the Society's semi-annual Flea Market or at activities at the Wilcox House. In 2023 Patty was presented with the Ethel Linnell Memorial Award in appreciation of her service to the Society. The Historical Society is not the only organization lucky enough to benefit from Patty's efforts. You may find her distributing Holcomb Farm vegetables at the Senior Center, cutting scrumptious desserts for the diners at Waste Not Want Not Community Kitchen, rallying the Friends of Stony Hill to spruce up the Village, or leading the Granby Community Fund in its efforts to support everyone in town! Both Patty and Jim have been active volunteers in Granby since moving here as newlyweds from Simsbury. Their 3 children, now adults, all attended Granby schools. Patty finds her greatest joy in staying busy and helping others.

Happy Valentine's Day



A valentine from the Society's collection, c.1900.

The Year Ahead

The volunteers are busy at the Society all year long, but our public-facing activities start off with a buzz in April with our participation in the Gran-Bee! The month of May brings our very popular Spring Flea Market and tours with local elementary schools. Tours for the general public will begin in June and will include monthly tours of the Wilcox House, with weaving demonstrations on our 300-year old loom. There will also be monthly viewings of our Aaron Draper Shattuck Collection, which has grown to 18 paintings plus other family items. September brings Open Farm Day and the Appraisal Fair and the end of our tour season. Our Fall Flea Market will take place in October and we'll have our Photo Day in November, in time for you to get cards printed for the holidays! Stay tuned for specific dates and times for all of these events. We look forward to seeing you in 2025!

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